

LD
2153
G63P

A
A
0
0
1
3
2
5
0
0
1
4



0 1 3 2 5 0 0 1 4





THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

OR

HARVARD COLLEGE

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY AT
CAMBRIDGE, MASS. JUNE 25, 1891

BY

WILLIAM WATSON GOODWIN,

ELLIOT PROFESSOR OF GREEK LITERATURE IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

BOSTON, U.S.A.

GINN & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS

1891

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

OF

HARVARD COLLEGE

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY AT
CAMBRIDGE, MASS., JUNE 25, 1891

BY

WILLIAM WATSON GOODWIN,

ELIOT PROFESSOR OF GREEK LITERATURE IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

A. P. 1891

BOSTON, U.S.A.

GINN & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS

1891

COPYRIGHT, 1891,
By GINN & COMPANY.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

ABROGADO TO VINDI
ZULHABA ZULIYA
YERBOLI

TYPOGRAPHY BY J. S. CUSHING & Co., BOSTON, U.S.A.
PRESSWORK BY GINN & Co., BOSTON, U.S.A.

HT
215
-300

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF HARVARD COLLEGE.



ON the rare occasions when our beloved Phi Beta Kappa departs from her custom of going abroad for a speaker to serve her at her annual festival, and summons one of the family at home to render his account in her presence, it is to be presumed that she wants to know how things are going on at the old homestead, what we are doing here for the great interests which she has most at heart, and especially whether she is likely to receive that cordial support from us in the future which has been her dependence in the past. The Phi Beta is the only society whose right to examine the condition of our scholarship is unquestioned. She is the only society here which represents college scholarship pure and simple. All her children either have achieved distinction for scholarship in college, or have shown in after life that they might have achieved it if they had wanted to or if the college had let them distinguish themselves in their own way. But, although Phi Beta keeps in her own hands the wholesome power of correcting the mistakes of the college authorities when they either overlook genius or allow it to blush unseen, she still accepts without question the body of recruits

47951

who are sent to her each year as "distinguished scholars." She is therefore deeply interested in knowing what class of men now come to her stamped as "distinguished scholars," and what class are likely to come with the same stamp in the future.

In obedience to what I accept as a direct command from Phi Beta herself, I shall attempt to answer two (perhaps I should say four) questions concerning the studies and the scholarship of Harvard College, to which she has a right to demand as plain an answer as can be given. These questions are —

I. Where are we now, and how did we get there?

II. Where are we going, and how do we expect to get *there*?

I am well aware that these are questions to which almost as many answers might be given as there are scholars entitled to an opinion, and that nobody can hope to answer them to everybody's satisfaction. In what I have to say, so far as is consistent with a free and honest answer, I shall attempt to avoid subjects which are now matters of controversy within the college walls.

I. What is the nature of the scholarship which Harvard College now stamps with her authority and encourages by her honors and rewards, including membership in this society? And how has the change been effected from what was called scholarship here fifty years ago to what is called scholarship here to-day?

It may be necessary to remind some of our older brethren, if they have not followed closely the later history

of the College, that, although the ancient rule for admission to the Phi Beta remains essentially unchanged, and a fixed number (at present twenty-five) of the highest scholars of each class are elected into the society, the word "scholar" has taken a new and wider meaning in these later years. The twenty-five who come to us now have distinguished themselves in many widely different fields of study; probably no two have distinguished themselves in exactly the same field; and perhaps no one has distinguished himself in any field which even closely resembles that in which our oldest brethren gained their college honors. For example, it is perfectly possible (though I sincerely hope it is not probable) that some whom we welcome here to-day for the first time have never studied a word of Greek or Latin, a line of Mathematics, or a page of Philosophy, Logic, or History, during their undergraduate course. And yet these were almost the only studies by which a student could gain admission to our society fifty years ago. This fact, however startling it may be to some of our brethren, is yet one of the common-places of the day to those of us who have witnessed the slow but steady steps by which the revolution of the last quarter of a century has been effected. I call this change a "revolution," for it has been indeed a most complete revolution both in the studies and in the whole manner of studying and of teaching. Whether we approve the change or not, the fact is beyond question, that the Harvard College of 1891 is as different from the Harvard College of 1841 as it

is from an English College or a French Lycée. The magnitude of the change is seldom appreciated by those who watch us from a distance. Even our most intelligent and friendly critics, when they tell us of our present weaknesses and short-comings (of which alas! we have only too many), are apt to suggest remedies which could be applied only by reversing a great part of our recent history. They tell us freely how to improve our machinery and where to oil it; but the machinery which they are talking about is no longer here: it has disappeared, never to return, with the Harvard College which they remember. It is as impossible to imagine an undergraduate of to-day in the college of fifty years ago, or a student of fifty years ago suddenly put into one of our present college classes, as to imagine the crowd of passengers who now go daily from Cambridge to Boston collected in the Square some morning to secure places in the old stage-coach which once made its single journey to the city, or to imagine the venerable Dr. Popkin stepping calmly out of his door on the West Cambridge road, and waving his historic umbrella to stop an electric car as it goes whizzing by. It is only when we take into account this complete revolution in all our ideas and all our ways, that such general statements as I have just made become intelligible: without this they are one-sided and misleading.

This great change in the College is chiefly the result of the elective system of studies which was introduced in 1867. This might be negatively defined as the direct

opposite of the required system which it superseded. It gave a great, even an unexpected, stimulus to freedom of every kind both in teaching and in studying. It has led to the reconsideration, and in most cases to the revision, of every principle of education which was formerly held sacred here; and it has compelled us to try many bold experiments, the end of which is not yet in sight. It is no wonder that, after such a complete overturn of established notions and such a general introduction of new ideas, we are not yet, after a quarter of a century, settled down into our ancient academic quiet. We have still much to do to assimilate all that we have added and are still adding to our educational material. We have still experiments to make which have never been tried; and we have still need of much wisdom to teach us to reconcile our new freedom with that wholesome restraint without which liberty in education, as in everything else, runs into license. In our political system we have never yet succeeded in harmonizing perfectly the centrifugal and centripetal forces of freedom and restraint. After more than a century neither France nor the rest of Europe has yet digested the French Revolution. Why should we be expected to have already recovered from the revolution we have passed through, in all our theory and practice of college education, and to be quietly at rest?

The elective system, however, is not responsible for all the changes which strike an old graduate most forcibly; for example, for the abolition of the old rules concerning attendance at literary exercises. An elective system in

itself permits no greater irregularity in attendance than a required system. On the contrary, when a student has chosen his own courses of study, the obligation to devote himself to them should be more binding and should be enforced with greater strictness than when they were chosen for him. Indeed, after many experiments, we are at last indebted to the elective system itself for the present principle, by which any instructor can exclude from his class, with the Dean's consent, at any time in the year, a student whose performance of work is not satisfactory to him, so that the student cannot count the course towards his degree. This somewhat homeopathic remedy promises to be a far more effective means of securing satisfactory work and regularity than the old absence-list, with its machinery of deductions, admonitions, and suspensions.

I shall not presume to give the Phi Beta Kappa an account of the elective system in its details. But I shall venture on what may be thought a still greater presumption,—an account of my own views of the elective principle from the time when I began to teach in the College, ten years before the present system was proposed. I do this, not so much by way of offering my own experience as a Carian's *corpus vile* for dissection, as in the hope that some interest may be felt in the view with which this principle has been regarded during thirty-five years by a teacher of the Classics, who has through that whole period never changed his opinion of the importance of classical study as a basis of literary culture. If I have not looked at the question solely or chiefly from the classical point of view,

and considered mainly what seemed to be for the interest of my own department, it is because I have never believed that classical study has any interest of any kind for or against the elective system, distinct from that of other departments of learning.

The required system was in its typical perfection when I came here in 1856 as tutor in Greek and Latin. The required Greek and Latin were then in possession of about two-fifths of each student's time. Next to these came the Mathematics; and the other required studies were Rhetoric and English Composition, Logic, History, Philosophy, Ethies, Physics, Chemistry, and a little Botany. Each Junior and Senior took one elective study. This represented what the majority of the Faculty then approved, or agreed to approve, as the best course of college study for the average student. The Faculty now does not insist on a single one of these studies as an essential part of a college education, except a small part of the Rhetoric and some English Composition. This change does not indicate any sudden or even gradual conversion of any large number of scholars as to the value of the old studies. It does remind us, however, of the radical change which the new studies introduced by the elective system have made in the constitution of the Faculty. When I graduated forty years ago, there were only six professors in the College Faculty; these were Edward T. Channing (whose resignation took effect that very day), James Walker, Cornelius C. Felton, Benjamin Peirce, Henry W. Longfellow, and Joseph Lovering. The Faculty of 1856 had only

seven professors. There are fifty-seven professors and assistant professors in the present Faculty of Arts and Sciences, which consists of about seventy members. As to myself, I can say that, without changing in the least my opinion as to the absolute or the relative value of the Classics in literary education, I have steadily favored the change by which Greek and Latin have been made elective after the Freshman year, and I have done this in what I have believed to be the best interests of classical scholarship as well as those of all other scholarship. As to the Freshman year, I have always thought that the elementary studies once required there belong to schools, and ought never to be taken into account in permanent plans of college study.

The first thing that struck me when I began to teach here in 1856 was what I had felt as a grievance as an undergraduate, that under the required system the standard of scholarship in each study was set, not by what the best and most enthusiastic scholars could do, but by what could reasonably be expected of the ordinary student of good intentions. This threw a depressing chill upon all who felt themselves able to do twice as much work as the class was doing, and almost everybody contented himself with the required mediocrity. During the recitation hour, in most studies, the better scholars were compelled to listen the greater part of the time to the talk of classmates who knew less than themselves and who seldom said anything of interest or value. The obvious plan of dividing a class according to pro-

iciency had then few advocates in the Faculty. President Walker told me quite severely, when I ventured to suggest it soon after my appointment, that it was opposed to the established policy of the College. This plan of division, which prevailed in President Quincy's time, and was abandoned at the end of President Everett's administration in 1849, was naturally unpopular with the lower scholars, and still more so with their parents, inasmuch as the distinction was based on a most obvious distinction in fact. And most teachers seem to have felt that the appalling horror of facing an unwilling class composed entirely of the dull, the indifferent, and the lazy, more than balanced the pleasure of teaching all the good scholars by themselves. The result was that nothing worthy of the name of high scholarship could be expected *as a right* in any department to which this system was applied, and the highest rank was often by necessity awarded to mere mediocrity.

I do not forget that under this old system of instruction many men left these halls inspired with a genuine love of classical learning, which has been a powerful influence for good to themselves and to others. Some of these are still with us; and we look up to them with admiration and respect, as living witnesses of a time when the demands of the College were small, but personal enthusiasm was great, when (as Mr. Emerson said to me twenty-five years ago, comparing later times unfavorably with his own) "the class thought nothing of a man who did not have an enthusiasm for something,"

and when the academic repose of the place made it easy to cultivate learning for learning's sake. But I think we should be in error if we credited this older scholarship to any high standard which was demanded or enforced by the College itself. And I am reminded by names with which many of us are familiar, — indeed, by faces which I see before me now, — that this classical scholarship was shared by some whom the college instruction never reached, and that the same generation could boast a goodly array of learned women among its scholars, who caught the same enthusiasm for classic learning which inspired their brothers or their fathers here.

But it was already obvious thirty-five years ago that the large share of college time then given to the Classics and the Mathematics could not be maintained, even under a strictly required system. New subjects were pressing hard for admission, and every year some sacrifice was demanded of the old studies to make place for some new comer. In this way alone, before any step whatever had been taken towards an elective system, the amount of time given to classical studies had been greatly cut down. The Greek, Latin, and Ancient History in the Freshman year, for example, had thus been reduced from twelve hours a week to six, and this was felt to be only a beginning. At the same time the introduction of written examinations increased the efficiency of each department, and made it less and less possible for students to give extra time to studies which

they preferred, as the requirements were more severely enforced in all. This equable pressure did much, I think, to repress the older enthusiasm of the place, and to encourage what was once (but is, I trust, no longer) known as "Harvard indifference." Thus even the moderate special scholarship which the older system secured was undermined on two sides, and every year was making this worse. It was really the fact, though it sounds like a paradox, that raising the standard of scholarship under the required system actually impeded scholarship. At this period a cry of "overwork" was raised, I think for the last time; and the Corporation actually sent a committee to the College to investigate this grievance. This committee of investigation "builted better than it knew"; and, though sent for an entirely different purpose, it opened the discussion which led within a year to the present elective system.

It had long been felt by many to whom this state of things seemed intolerable, — by none more keenly than by the teachers of the Classics and the Mathematics, who were commonly believed to hold a monopoly under the required system, — that the only escape from the increasing evils which surrounded us was to be found in a plan by which no student should be required to take all studies, but every student should be allowed to give much more time and attention to certain branches which he elected than he could give to any of his studies before. It was clearly recognized that no partial and restricted scheme of elective study could help high scholarship. As Presi-

dent Walker said in 1867: "Who supposes that the mere right of selection among a crowd of *elementary* studies will make a university?" This evil was carefully avoided in the plan adopted in 1867, which was thus distinguished from all our previous elective systems. Fortunately the increasing resources of the College enabled each department to offer a greater variety of courses each year to meet new demands. To take an illustration from the department with which I am most familiar,—where formerly one regular course in Greek and one in Latin were assigned to each of the four classes, now twenty-one full courses and nineteen half courses of various grades are offered to all who are competent to take them. New courses called for new teachers. In 1856, when Greek and Latin were both required until the end of the Junior year, all the work in them was done by five teachers. Now, when both are entirely elective from the beginning, eleven or twelve teachers are fully employed. It need hardly be said that the standard of scholarship in every department was at once raised by this reform. It sprang up of itself the moment the old pressure was taken off. No teacher was now expected to set a standard for his best scholars which every faithful dunce could reach. The "faithful dunce" was now always supposed to be "somewhere else"; the standard of scholarship ignored him completely, and his day of power was over. I cannot emphasize too strongly that the chief merit of the present elective system is not that it lets students study what they like and avoid what they dislike, but that it opens

to all a higher and wider range of study in every field: in short, it has made really high scholarship possible.

As time went on, the development of higher instruction brought about a most gratifying, though somewhat unexpected, result. Some of the courses offered in various departments for the special benefit of undergraduates who intended to be teachers appeared better suited to the education of professional scholars than to ordinary college study. It was not long before these courses were greatly increased in number, and a list of Graduate Studies was then offered to our own graduates and to those of other colleges, as well as to our most competent undergraduates. Thus, from small and modest beginnings, and with many serious gaps in its courses of instruction, arose the Graduate Department, to which was intrusted the instruction of candidates for the degree of Master of Arts and for the newly established degrees of Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Science. About a year ago this somewhat informal department was organized into the present Graduate School, co-ordinate with the professional schools of Theology, Law, and Medicine, and was placed under the control of the new Faculty of Arts and Sciences. It is felt more and more strongly every year that the moderate amount of knowledge which we now demand, or the greatest which we can ever hope to demand, for the Bachelor's degree can no longer be the sum total of education for those who are to make teaching their profession, to devote themselves to any literary or scientific pursuit, to the important profession of journal-

ism, or to public life. The enthusiasm with which our best universities are now organizing studies for Bachelors of Arts, and the increasing resort of graduates to these centres of learning, show the power of this movement towards true university education, a power which is just beginning to be felt. We owe special gratitude to the Johns Hopkins University at Baltimore, which called public attention to the importance of this movement by its bold experiment of establishing its Graduate School before any other department was organized and by devoting its chief energies to this from the beginning. In these new Graduate Schools we see the brightest hope for the future American university.

I have thus far spoken of the elective system as an unmitigated blessing to the College. I cannot deny that it has its evils, and none understand these so well as those who know the system best. We do not pretend that we have found and developed a perfect plan of college study. I regret as much as anybody the gaps which the elective system often leaves, or allows careless students to leave, in their education. I do not like to see young men go out from college stamped with the highest marks of honor, who have never read a line of the Iliad, who do not know what a syllogism is, or the difference between a planet and a fixed star. But when I look at these defects of our system, and then turn to the wonderful advance in scholarship which we owe to this same system, and especially when I think how hopeless even our present scholarship seemed to us all twenty-five years ago, I cannot feel that

we have made a mistake in securing this permanent gain, and in establishing our Graduate School as a custodian of our higher scholarship, even if we have temporarily sacrificed some of the lesser interests of learning. I say "temporarily," because I believe that a corrective will be found in the near future for much (if not all) of this evil. And I cannot but feel that the interests which we now sacrifice are the lesser interests of learning; for there is no necessity or inducement under our present system for anybody to exclude from his studies either Homer, Logic, or the elements of Astronomy. When we look on this place as a seat of learning, it is surely a nobler duty to open to everybody the highest instruction in every department than to prevent a few foolish persons from neglecting even important elementary branches.

I have never advocated the elective system on the ground that it enables the idle, the lazy, and the indifferent to select studies which are better suited to what they are pleased to call their "tastes." Let it be understood that I do not include in these classes any who are reclaimed from idleness and indifference by a wider range of study: these accessions to the rank of scholars I warmly welcome, though I think their number is apt to be overrated. But the great majority of those who come here without literary tastes and without interest in physical or natural science are no better off than they were before. The elective system is no gain to them. They are a great gain to the higher scholarship which the elective system fosters, like the pins in the boy's composition which "saved

the lives of many people by their not swallowing them." They have done an incalculable service to the higher learning by ceasing to obstruct it: indeed, their absence has made the higher learning for the first time possible. But on the whole, I am inclined to think the elective system is a bad thing for them: though I cannot think it a very important question for a university, viewed as a seat of learning, whether it is bad for them or not. What they most need is, not to be allowed to do some easy thing towards which they feel less repugnance than towards something else, but rather to be compelled to do something which they cannot do without at least the highest mental effort of which they are capable. It is the smallest of the duties of a university, however, to minister to this want. I have no objection to letting these summer residents occupy their cottages on our grounds, and I rejoice whenever (to use President Quincy's phrase) they "rub a little whitewash from the college walls"; I object only to wasting our precious resources in providing them special entertainment, and I do not believe in smearing our walls with cheaper whitewash, that can be rubbed off with less friction than could the more solid pigment which covered the walls of President Quincy's day. If any one should blame us for unduly neglecting the interests of those "students" who come here to avoid study, while I should not admit the truth of the charge, I should deem it a satisfactory answer, that if Harvard College should be managed for half a century in the interest of its best scholars, it would be no more than a fair compensation for the long period in which a great

part of its energy was spent in a vain attempt to bring the lower half of each class up to a disreputable minimum. while the real scholars were left to themselves.

But, whatever may be the defects of our present plan, it is evident that an elective system is the only possible one here now. If we were compelled to return to a required system, we should have not less than fifteen or sixteen studies, all claiming a share of the student's time. All higher studies would disappear, and classes of three hundred and three hundred and sixty-six would be taught chiefly what they ought to have learnt at school by such instructors as could be induced to repeat the same lessons wearily to ten or twelve sections. But nobody seriously thinks of this as a possibility. The College could no more be crowded into the old required system than a man could be squeezed into the clothes which he wore as a boy. If, on the other hand, the Faculty were to try to lay out a course of elective study which they could recommend to all who had no reason for preferring any other course, one which should represent what might be called a "well-rounded" plan of academic study, almost as many plans would be proposed as there were members willing to undertake the task, while many would think such an attempt inexpedient or useless. Now this does not imply any diseased condition of our Faculty; it would probably be the same with any body of seventy professional teachers similarly congregated. It fairly represents the breaking-up of all the old opinions as to what should constitute a (so-called) liberal education, which recent years have wit-

nessed. I regret this breaking-up as much as some others rejoice in it. But, however we feel about it, we must accept it for the present as a most stubborn fact. I believe that the remedy will come in time from much-needed reforms in school education. I believe that the true reason why we find it so hard to advise young men who come to us for help is, that they have not learnt enough at school. In President Walker's words, "they have not as yet completed the general and preliminary studies which are necessary to a liberal education; and therefore for them the time has not come to talk about dropping one study and taking up another." They often cannot take what we should like to advise them to study, because they have no knowledge of some elementary subject which they need and should have learnt at school, but which we cannot advise them to study in college. Our trouble is, that our machinery is better than much of our material. But this is far better than the reverse: indeed, it is only by going through this stage that we can hope to get better material. I have no anxiety about the final result, though this may be still in the dim distance. I am sure that the future has in store a solution of this problem and of many other far more perplexing problems; but we need wisdom and careful thought; and above all we need patience.

II. I have thus tried to answer my first question, and to show the present state of studies in Harvard College and explain how we have come to this new condition during the past quarter of a century. I am on more danger-

ous ground in attempting to answer my second question, — To what future are we tending, and by what steps is this future to be reached? Those of us who can imagine ourselves in 1857 trying to predict the state of the College in 1891 can best appreciate the value of this year's predictions of what we shall have become in 1925.

But of one thing I feel very sure. We are not to have any type of European university established here. It has sometimes occurred to me in the past that we might be in more danger from the opposite tendency, a prejudice against foreign influences. Nothing rouses a stronger opposition to any scheme for university reform than the charge that it is foreign. We Americans are the most patriotic people in the world, and we hug our national weaknesses with the most ardent affection. If anybody wanted to make a foreign plan of education prevail here, he would have little chance of success unless he could array it in a good American dress and make people think it was a natural growth of our own academic soil. Our previous history has shown remarkable independence in borrowing single academic features from both England and Germany and in rejecting others. It might be hard to maintain that we have always borrowed the best and rejected the worst; but we have certainly never borrowed in any servile spirit or in any wholesale fashion. I have sometimes felt that we have occasionally made mistakes in trying to force German grafts to grow on our old English stock, and perhaps I have been as great an offender here as any one. Harvard began as an English college of the

Cambridge type, and it remained essentially an English college down to the early years of this century. This appears in the tutorial nature of its teaching and in all its traditions. Before 1810 there were only two professorships which belonged to the College proper,—the two founded by Thomas Hollis in Divinity and in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. During the last seventy-five years the traditions of the original English college have gradually given way to the direct influence of the German university, and our chief reforms in teaching and in organization have been inspired from Göttingen and Berlin rather than from Cambridge and Oxford. In the establishment of our schools of Theology, Law, and Medicine, which largely follow German precedents, we made the greatest departure from our English antecedents. These three professional schools have fairly represented three of the Faculties of the German university; but our old English college, even with its latest improvements, has in no sense represented the fourth, the Faculty of Philosophy, or indeed anything which is recognized in German education. It has always had the traditional freedom of an English college, and none of the smaller discipline of a German gymnasium: but it has never had any of the very different freedom of a German university. By retaining the Bachelor's degree as the necessary goal toward which all must strive, a degree which it is no honor to gain but a disgrace to lose, it assumes a responsibility for the scholarship of each student, which is purely an English tradition and wholly foreign to the spirit of a

German university. But at last we see the real germ of a Faculty of Philosophy in our new Graduate School, with its perfect freedom both in teaching and in learning. It has no degree in course for which all students are candidates, and consequently no paternal supervision of each student's daily work. Its degrees are given only to those who earn them by passing special examinations on special work. We all welcome this new accession with pride and joy, and we feel that in its future lies much of the future power of the university. The most important work of this school, as it develops its resources and expands its departments, will be (as I have said) the education of those who are to be teachers or writers or who are to enter public life. The demands of our country for professional education for all these is rapidly growing, and especially the advancing standard of the teacher's profession requires more and more strictly that every teacher shall be able (as Plato expresses it) "to show *his* teacher and the time he spent in learning." The Graduate School must answer these new calls, and it must take its place with the other professional schools as a home of advanced learning, where the best and the highest which each department can offer will be found, and where students will learn also (what is much more important) the scientific methods of investigation by which all sciences have been advanced, that they may be leaders, not followers, in the great march of education.

But this future prospect, so full of promise and hope, suggests to some of our friends the anxious question:

Will there be any place in the new university for the old college? Will not its work be gradually absorbed by the Graduate School above and the High Schools below, and will not the university then devote her strength entirely to professional training in Theology, Law, Medicine, and the Arts and Sciences? And after another half century will not the old Harvard College have lost its usefulness and have become extinct?

This can never be, until the university is ready to renounce for the future what has been her chief service in the past, and to abandon her position as a home of liberal culture. But I cannot allow myself to use this much-abused phrase "liberal culture" here without stopping to explain what I mean by liberal study and to what I understand it to be opposed. It is not too much to say, that very few are substantially agreed as to the meaning of this time-honored title, while every discussion of educational problems seems soberly to assume that some very definite idea is attached to it. We gain little by going back to the seven *artes liberales*, with their *Trivium* of Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic, and their *Quadrivium* of Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astronomy, into which the Greek and Roman education finally crystallized, and which ruled the universities of the Middle Ages. We must remember that "Grammar" here originally meant "reading and writing" (*γραμματική* being the knowledge of *γράμματα*, *letters*), and the term is older than anything which is now known as Grammar. These seven arts no longer represent to anybody's mind an

encyclopædic or well-rounded education, although we still gravely make men bachelors and masters of them, while few of us can even remember their seven names. Liberal study has now come to mean whatever is approved by any college authorities as proper study for their students, in short, whatever has the sanction of those who happen to be in power, the *beati possidentes*. Our college authorities would not let it be said that any one of our three hundred and thirteen courses of study, from the highest in Metaphysics or the purest in Mathematics to the most elementary in French or German, is not liberal study; and it would be hard to draw any consistent line among them which would be in harmony with modern usage.

In Aristotle we find the first distinct statement of the ancient doctrine of liberal study and liberal knowledge, that they are study and knowledge which are "fit for freemen." This definition itself is of no use to us; for we have only free-born persons to deal with, and what is not fit for freemen now is not fit for anybody. But Aristotle carries us further back than this, and lands us in an intelligible distinction at last. He says it is most unfitted to high-souled and free-born men to be always looking for what is useful in education. What we teach may be useful, but usefulness is a secondary not a primary consideration. The branches commonly taught Greek youth, he says, are letters, gymnastics, and music, to which some add drawing. Letters may be useful as they help in housekeeping and business: but they are studied chiefly because they open to us wide fields of

higher learning. Drawing is studied, not that we may avoid being cheated in buying and selling goods, but that we may understand works of art and have a scientific knowledge of beauty in the human form. Music he specially praises, because it can never be of any practical use, but is chiefly an adornment of leisure. By *leisure* he does not mean idleness, nor idleness varied by occasional literary diversion; but freedom from mechanical work that we may devote the mind to higher studies. We see this when he says that only a man of leisure can be a student of the highest philosophy. He promises hereafter to describe an education which we should give our sons "not as being useful or necessary, but as liberal and beautiful"; but this "hereafter" is one of the disappointments to which we are doomed by the mutilated text of Aristotle's *Politics*. He gives us an interesting hint, however, of what other people thought, which shows us that his day was not so very different from our day as we are apt to think. He says:—

"It is evident that we must have a universal system of education prescribed by law. For now there is no agreement on either the subjects or the manner of education. All are not agreed on what the young shall study either to teach them virtue or to secure the highest life: nor is it settled whether education shall aim to cultivate the intellect or to establish the moral character. And if we look at the actual education of our own day, we are only the more perplexed. Nobody seems to know whether youth are to be trained in what will be useful

in getting a living, or in what tends to promote virtue, or in the higher studies; all three of these views have their advocates. Further, there is no agreement about the studies which promote virtue; for all do not mean the same thing by the virtue which they honor, so that naturally they cannot agree on the best way to train youth to be virtuous."

It is evident that Aristotle had little faith in the school-master of his day! It is evident also that he associated liberal study with study which is *not useful* or which is not pursued because it is useful, and that he would have agreed with Mr. Lowell's idea of a university, that it is "a place where nothing useful is taught." But Aristotle took much greater interest in another distinction of studies, which goes deeper into their real nature and was probably always in his mind when he talked of liberal learning. This is his distinction of *free* and *slavish* studies, those which are in themselves free or slavish, and not merely fit for freemen or for slaves. As we call a man a freeman, he says, when he exists for himself and not for another, so is a science free which exists purely for itself and is not the handmaid of any other. The only strictly free study he calls his own science of Philosophy, which is the study of principles and causes, from the knowledge of which all other knowledge springs; this is a science which none of the mere servile sciences can dare to contradict. Others are free or slavish according to the motives with which they are pursued. We must always keep in mind (he tells us) the difference between free and servile work: for what

it is not servile to do for ourselves or our family and friends, it may be servile to do for strangers. All work is servile, he distinctly says, which is done for pay, for this robs the mind of its leisure and humiliates it. A study, therefore, which is free and liberal if it is pursued to cultivate the student's mind, he would call slavish and illiberal if it is to be used in the service of others for a reward. Here we have, in its most offensive form, the old philosopher's lordly contempt for gaining an honest living by the honest work of hands or brains, the view which regards the necessity for labor as a primeval curse. It is the doctrine of the *ignobility* of toil, from which few, even of the best Greeks, could free themselves. In this spirit Plato and Aristotle, with their ample fortunes, taught without price, and stigmatized all who taught for a fee as "hirelings." This crime of being "hirelings" was the one unpardonable sin of the much-abused Sophists; and we often repeat the charge, forgetting its honorable foundation. On the same principle, Socrates, who had no fortune and would neither work at his father's trade of a statuary nor be paid for his own teaching, walked proudly through the streets of Athens, barefooted and half clad, and left Xanthippe to starve. But although Aristotle's distinction of free and slavish studies is one which we can only repudiate with indignation, showing us (as few things in his writings do) how much the world has outgrown in twenty-two centuries, it is at the same time, if rightly applied, one of the most valuable distinctions for us to observe in university education. It is really the distinction between liberal and

professional studies; only in applying it we set up no claim to superior dignity for the liberal, and cast no aspersion of servility on the professional. One class is as reputable and as dignified as the other; but yet they should be kept distinct, and each should be confined to its proper limits.

A free or liberal study, therefore, according to this oldest and most fundamental distinction, is any study, whatever its nature, which is pursued for its own sake, to gratify the mind's thirst for principles and causes, and not because it is to be made useful. It is whatever the human mind seizes and assimilates through its craving for real knowledge, which is as much a natural craving as that of the body for food and drink. It is by satisfying this appetite, and filling the mind again and again with ever fresh knowledge that the mind grows and matures; the various stores of knowledge pass away when they have done their work, like the food which sustains the body: but the healthy and vigorous mind retains wisdom as the healthy body retains strength. We must never forget that the "knowledge for its own sake," which is the object of free or liberal study, by no means includes everything which can be *known*. The acquaintance which we make with scattered facts is mere experience, which we share with the brutes. It is only when such facts are combined by reason into general principles that they constitute true *science* or knowledge (what Aristotle called ἐπιστήμη). By this criterion, and by this alone, must we test the claim of every study which demands a place in liberal education.

and a university which fails to apply this test neglects one of its highest duties. This continual supply of knowledge to the mind must be made under proper regulation and wise advice, as much as the supply of food to the body; and ill-regulated absorption of knowledge, or of bare facts which merely lumber the mind and do not constitute knowledge, gives mental dyspepsia as surely as ill-regulated eating gives a disordered stomach.

We must remember the important truth that studies which are liberal if pursued with one motive may become professional (Aristotle would say "slavish") if pursued with another motive. And the reverse is equally true, that studies which are commonly professional may be pursued as liberal. Every study ceases to be liberal and becomes professional when it is undertaken consciously as preparation for one's work in life; while precisely the same study, when it is made part of a general education, to gratify thirst for knowledge, is liberal. A lawyer might study Theology, or a theologian might study Law, as either might study the Classics or Physies; and thus precisely the same things might be liberal study to one and professional study to the other. So any man of culture who does not think of professional study, a man of business or a man of leisure (in Aristotle's sense), might pursue liberal studies in the best sense in Theology, Law, or Medicine. Even the study of the Classics, which is often claimed as liberal in an almost exclusive sense, may become professional in the strictest sense; indeed,

it has long been so in the German universities, and it is becoming more and more so in our Graduate School.

This shows that the distinction of professional and liberal study must not be pushed too far; but the distinction is none the less real because the line which marks it is delicate and sometimes hard to trace. And the exceptions only prove (i.e. *test*) the rule. For example, there is no question that all the studies in our Divinity, Law, and Medical Schools are strictly professional: and that the higher courses in the Graduate School (those which give the School its distinctive character) are professional. But a candidate for the Master's degree may take a course of study in any of these four schools with no professional intention; indeed, if he takes studies in any of the first three, he must declare that he does not intend to offer them hereafter for a professional degree. Such studies become purely liberal for those who take them in this spirit. Even a professional student may study some subjects which bear on his profession with mixed motives; and every enthusiastic scholar will follow many lines of thought, even in his professional work, far beyond the limits of strictly professional needs. This point is illustrated by a wise provision of our Graduate School, which comes from its close connection with the College and its origin in the extension of college studies. Its courses are of two classes, those intended "primarily for Graduates" and those intended "for Graduates and Undergraduates." The former are for the most part strictly professional; the latter are equally adapted to three

classes of students, — first, to those whose previous study has not fitted them to take the higher courses at once, but who still aim at these with professional intentions; secondly, to those who make them a part of a general course of study for the Master's degree (for which a year's general or special study is required); and thirdly, for more advanced undergraduates who are specially devoted to any department. This elasticity in the studies of the Graduate School adapts it to the wants of students who come to it with every variety of preparation for their work; and while it will always be valuable, it is at present indispensable.

This brings me back to the point from which I made this long digression. I have said that we can never allow the old College to drop out between the lower schools and the professional schools unless we are willing to see the university become wholly a place for professional study and cease to be a home of liberal culture. I have shown that the Graduate School fills an entirely new place of her own. She can never take upon herself any of the duties of the College; and this must still remain the appointed representative and custodian of purely liberal studies in the university. The question is: Shall she give up this sacred trust, which was confided to her more than two hundred and fifty years ago, and which through all her changing fortunes she has faithfully kept?

If this should ever be seriously proposed, it should call forth a united protest from the sons of Harvard and

from all friends of sound learning throughout the land. Such a step would lead us into one of the greatest evils of German education; and we should have none of the safeguards which the solid connection of the German schools with the universities and of both with a strong central government has always provided. No one has a greater admiration than I have for the universities of Germany. If the service which they have rendered to higher education were struck out of history, the world would go back half a century, and there would now be few problems of higher scholarship for us to discuss. And yet, if I could bring the University of Berlin here to supplant this university, and if our schools were ready to prepare students for it, I should refuse to make the exchange, provided the relation between the schools and the university were to become what they are now in Germany. My reason would be, that the German system leaves no place between school and professional study for a purely liberal education. A German passes by a single leap from the life of a school-boy to that of a man who is (or ought to be) beginning the serious work of life. He knows no period of transition, such as is open to the English and American youth, when his ship is loosed from shore but is still in harbor, when he is in the world but not exactly of the world, when he has a right to spend his time in becoming acquainted with the great heritage which has been bequeathed him before he is called to administer it and improve it for his successors, when he can quietly explore various

lines of thought and decide (if he can) in which one he can do the best service for himself and his generation, when he is, in short, a college undergraduate. This is the period when most young men make their closest acquaintance with the great men, the great deeds, and the great thoughts, which have made this world a fit abode of intelligent beings and have saved it from being a mere "cockpit of fighting gladiators." To this habit of our English race of taking a period of rest combined with most active work, of active work free from the responsibilities of real life, between boyhood and manhood, we owe much that gives the English and American college-bred man his distinct character, which often makes him a more cultivated man than one of a different stamp with perhaps far greater learning. There is nothing, it seems to me, to which our educated men should cling with closer tenacity, nothing which they should guard with more jealous care, than this period of free academic study, when a youth is to seek learning for the learning's own sake, and not for its ulterior uses, when he is to strive to make himself a man before he is called on to act as a man in the struggle of life.

But some, who admit the truth of all this, still anxiously ask: Will there be time found, in all the rush and hurry of our American life, for this luxury of academic study? When Harvard University is fully equipped for all professional work, when the Graduate School is developed into a Department of the Arts and Sciences, when the High Schools have advanced (as we hope they will) with

equal pace, will there still be room left between the preparatory and the professional schools for this course of purely liberal study? Unless our successors here are fatally blinded to the best interests of learning throughout the land, room for this will be most sacredly kept. This is a matter which concerns deeply a large part of our cultivated men. It is, in fact, the question whether our clergymen, lawyers, physicians, and merchants are to be cut off from a college education, and sent directly from the benches of a school to their professional study or their business. None of these classes can have any interest in the Graduate School: their only hope of higher education is in the old College. Imagine for a moment what it would be to us, if none of our present clergymen, lawyers, physicians, and merchants were college-bred men! The very suggestion threatens our whole community with a calamity which would be appalling if the danger were serious. For myself, I have not the least fear of the answer which the coming generation will give to this question if it is ever asked. The amount of time which will ultimately be given to this course of general education may change, as standards of scholarship advance both in school and in college; but I do not think that any changes will ever allow the standard of scholarship of the Bachelor's degree to be *lowered*, whatever may be the time required for earning it. For myself, I hope the standard of this degree may in time be advanced by at least a year, while the age of taking it may be lowered by at least a year. I am perfectly aware that this will seem Quixotic to many

who acquiesce too contentedly in our present condition. But it would be only to expect from American young men what is not only expected but obtained from young men in every other country with which we should not deem it insulting to be compared in ability or in quickness of intellect. It is a notorious and discreditable fact, but still a fact which needs to be proclaimed afresh even to the Phi Beta Kappa, that our students now come to college at the age of nineteen with no more knowledge than an English, French, German, or Swiss boy has at seventeen, and—what is more discreditable still—with no more than our own New England boy had at seventeen fifty or sixty years ago. One of the greatest of the many great services which the President of the University has rendered to the cause of education is the complete demonstration which he has given, not only of these facts, but also of their causes. No one can examine the tables in which President Eliot has compared in parallel columns the studies of a French Lycée and a Boston public school, without seeing at once that the unpleasant truth is rather depreciated than exaggerated. The French boy of fifteen is pursuing the same studies with our boys of seventeen or eighteen. It is obvious that by bad management *somewhere* the American boy is defrauded of at least two years of his time at school. Though the amount of the loss is more conspicuous when we come to the higher schools, the real waste of time seems to be effected chiefly in schools of the lower grades, where the skill sometimes shown in spreading the elements of learning *thin* would

be laughable were it not pathetic. The time often wasted on such matters as percentage, interest, and compound numbers is simply incredible. I cannot go into details here; but I will mention that in the time which our boy generally gives to Arithmetic alone a French boy learns Arithmetic, Plane Geometry, and Algebra. The greater part of this loss is not to be charged to bad teaching. If it were, the remedy would be comparatively simple. A far greater share is due to bad systems, which are imposed on the teachers by standing rules, and often compel a good teacher to waste nearly as much time as a poor one. The pernicious custom of keeping brighter pupils back until the dull and the lazy can be expected to reach a given point is almost enough to account for the whole trouble. Classes in our schools often have an amount of work given them for a year which any bright boy or girl can do in three months, while there is no regular provision by which those who can do it in less time shall as a matter of course go on to other work. Another evil, one peculiar to this country, but a most unnecessary one, is the constant interruption of study by calls of society and by a thousand other distractions which in other countries would never be allowed to break in upon study in school. Here study is charged with all sorts of harm of which it is wholly innocent; and hours of school time are shortened and vacations are lengthened, under the delusion that pupils are overworked who have no conception of what real work means. Whatever may be the causes, the appalling fact remains, that our pupils, when they leave school, are

two years behind those of the same age in other countries. Dr. Fowler tells us in the last Harvard Monthly that fifteen years ago he left a class in a German gymnasium whose average age was under sixteen, and came here fully prepared to enter our Freshman class, whose average age was much over eighteen. Nobody has been able to show any gain by which our boys and girls make up for this backwardness. Certainly it is not to be found in superior health and strength. And would anybody venture to say that our children are mentally inferior to the others?

I have said that we are behind even our own record of fifty or sixty years ago. When Freshmen entered Harvard College easily at fifteen and sixteen, the requirements for admission were hardly more than a year behind the present demands. There can be no doubt, for example, that Exeter Academy could easily have sent us boys of sixteen and seventeen then with as great an amount of preparation as we now require from those of nineteen. Dr. Peabody, who took his Bachelor's degree here at fifteen would smile at the suggestion of a doubt on this point. But what do we find at Exeter now? Boys *enter* the academy now older than they once *left* it for college; and at this age (sixteen or seventeen) they are required merely to have "some knowledge of Common School Arithmetic, writing, spelling, and of the elements of English Grammar." There is the whole melancholy story, in a very small nutshell. I select Exeter as an example, not by way of censure, but *honoris causa*. We are sure that she does her best with the material which comes to her from the

lower schools. And this is the best which one of the oldest and most ambitious New England academies can now demand from boys of sixteen and seventeen, hardly as much as she could once have demanded and obtained from boys of twelve and thirteen.

Let no one imagine that this concerns college education alone, though it fetters the scholarship of every college in the land. It is not merely a question of bringing a small minority of our youth to college two years earlier; it is a question of the deepest interest to every school-boy and school-girl among us. Saving these two lost years means adding two years to the time which each of the pupils in our schools can give to the work of education, work which is sorely needed to fit them for the responsibilities of citizens in this growing democracy. Saving these two years means for every thousand children in our schools the saving of two thousand years of human life; it means the rescue, for the world's service, of an aggregate of time greater than that from the Christian era to the present day. And there are now more than ten thousand children in the schools of Cambridge alone.

Can this country afford to make this sacrifice of precious time any longer? With all the expense which we so willingly lavish on our public schools, in sight of the palaces of brick and stone which we erect in the cause of free education, are we content to see the education of which these palaces are the home thus lagging behind that of less favored nations? Would it not be wise economy to transfer some of the expenditure from the outside to the

inside of our costly school-houses? And, in the face of all this, can we listen with patience to protestations that we have no time to give to liberal culture in college, and that our youth must save every precious moment by rushing directly from school to the study of a profession? I will not ask this audience whether this wicked waste is to go on. It can be stopped, and it will be stopped. The reform has even now passed the theoretical stage, and able and earnest teachers are proving by their work that the lost time can be saved, and saved to the great advantage of the work itself. A united effort of the friends of learning is all that is needed to ensure success. If everybody who is interested in either school or college education, if every member of the Phi Beta Kappa, for example, would urge the crying need for this reform on every school committee which he can influence, the abuse would be swept away and the victory would be won.

I think we can safely predict that another quarter of a century will find Harvard holding an honorable position among a goodly number of American universities, which will supply our students at home with the higher learning for which they now resort by hundreds to the universities of Germany. She will be fully equipped for the best work in every department, in Theology, in Law, in Medicine, and in the Arts and Sciences. I think we may be sure that she will always represent the foremost progress of science and will always welcome the boldest speculation on every subject. No party nor sect will control her teaching, to cause either the promulgation of unscientific

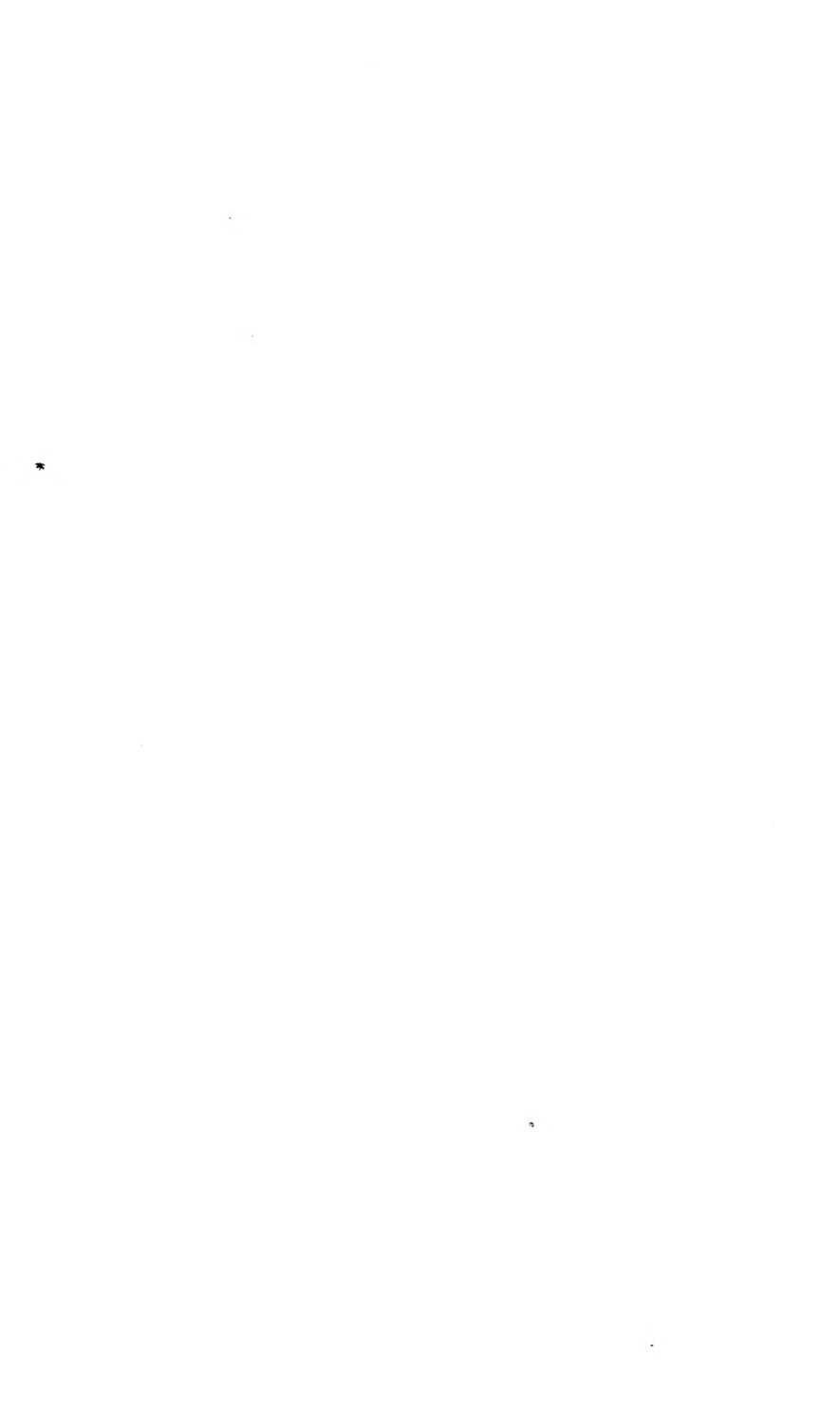
dogmas or the suppression of scientific truth. I need hardly say here that no exception will be made in this respect for Philosophy, Political Science, or even Theology. Public opinion is fast settling this matter beyond the reach of controversy. Parties and sects will of course preach their own doctrines and creeds then in their own schools, as they do now; but the true university can recognize only the free and unbiassed search for truth for the truth's sake. Happily we have no antiquated statutes or traditions to sweep away to prepare us for the coming age. Our ancient motto *Veritas* stands always over our gates, and we interpret it by the principle of freedom. "Prove all things: hold fast to that which is good."

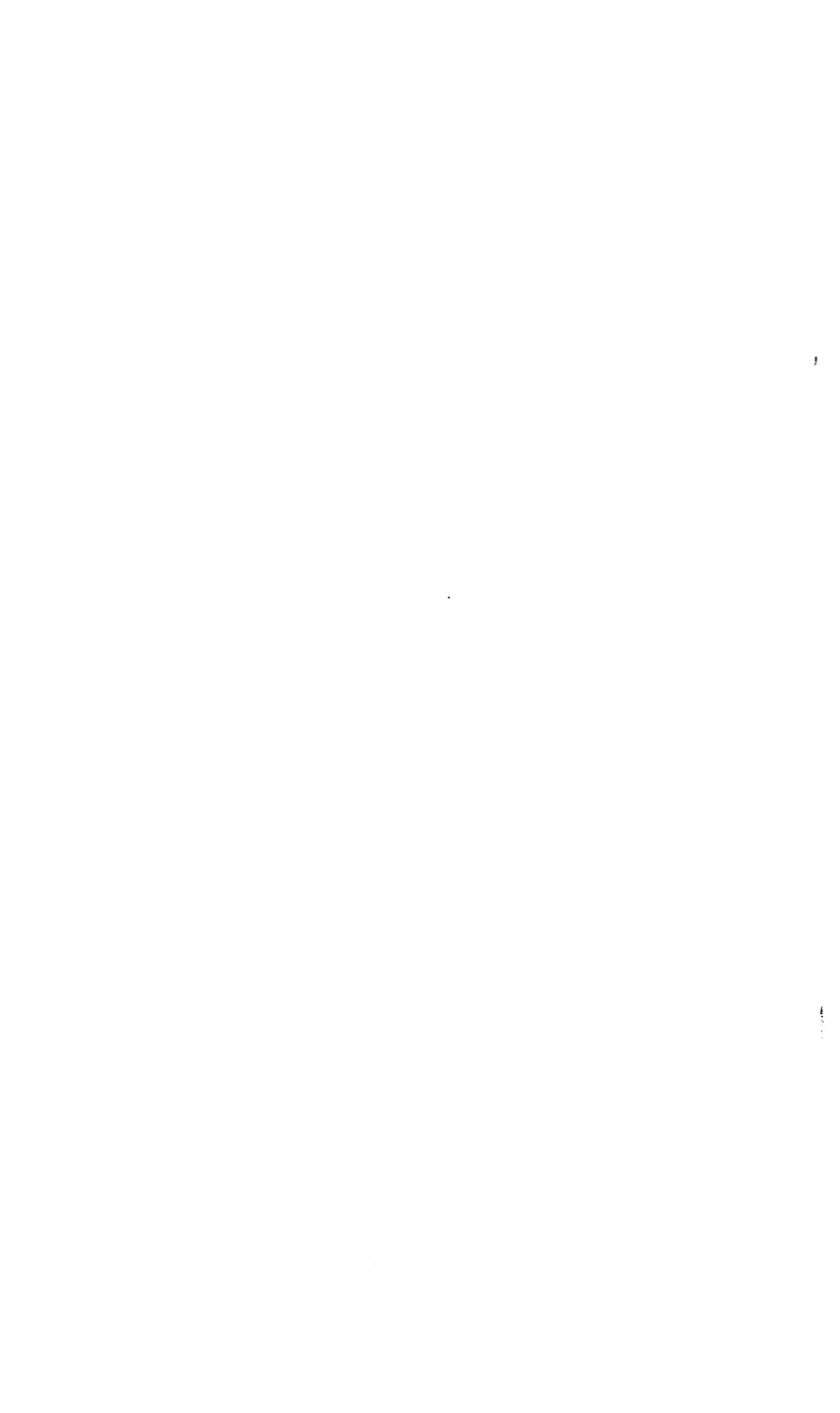
We have the assurance of the past that this university will never be hampered in the pursuit of knowledge by want of means. European universities boast of the imperial and national governments which support them, and support them with noble liberality; but the bounty of emperors and princes, and even of republics, is precarious, and may fail with political changes. Harvard has a more than imperial treasury in the love and respect of her sons and in the confidence of the community.

Finally, I believe that the sure and solid foundation of the whole university will be in the future, as it has been in the past, the old Harvard College, whom we all love as dutiful children, and who has always been a loving mother to us. If her fostering care ever seems to fail, it is the fault of her ministers, not her own. Like a queen, she can do no wrong. She did her best for her sons when her

means were scanty; she will still do her best for them in her days of prosperity. She will never abandon to the care of strangers those whose fathers she has loved and cherished as her children: her children will trust the nurture of their sons to no Alma Mater but their own.







THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA LIBRARY



L 009 529 965

THE NORTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 001 325 001

